Commission on Teacher Credentialing

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Professional Services Division

March 20, 2012

To: Deans and Directors of Educator Preparation Programs – Blue Cohort

The new accreditation system requires that all institutions submit program assessment documents in the fourth year of the cycle. As Blue Cohort members, your institution is scheduled to submit program assessment documents towards the end of the 2012 year. These institutions/program sponsors will have a Site Visit during the 2014-2015 year and, therefore, the Preliminary Report of Findings from the Program Assessment needs to be finalized, at the latest, by early spring 2014.

This letter outlines the purpose and process of Program Assessment as well as provides valuable best practices for preparing your documents. These best practices should help you to complete Program Assessment in a timely manner and position your institution for a successful Site Visit. **Taking the time to thoroughly read this letter and explore all of the related linked information will be highly beneficial as your institution moves towards the accreditation Site Visit in Year 6 of the 7-year accreditation cycle.**

The revised accreditation system includes a series of activities throughout a 7-year cycle. This system is built upon the foundation of annual data collection, analysis and program improvement by each institution/program sponsor. Periodic reports to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) inform the agency about improvement efforts based upon data and their relationships to both the Common and Program Standards. Activities that the CTC administers are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment and Site Visits. This letter provides detailed information and underlined links about Program Assessment:

- Purpose and Description of Program Assessment
- Schedules for Submission of Program Assessment Documents and Preliminary Report of Findings
    - Schedule for Submission of Documents
    - Delinquent Documents
    - Extension Requests
    - How and When to Submit Documents for Recently Approved, Transitioning, and Inactive Programs
    - Resubmission and Review Timelines
- Technical Assistance and Document Reading
- Document Formatting and Transmission
- Procedures for Reviewing and Providing Feedback on Program Assessment Documents
- Biennial Reports
- Submission Information Required by **April 20, 2012**.

Purpose and Description of Program Assessment: Program Assessment, which takes place in Year 4 of the accreditation cycle, is the feature of the accreditation system that asks program sponsors to demonstrate that each program is aligned with the adopted program standards. Program Assessment examines each program individually, provides feedback to the program sponsor and informs the team about items to verify during the Site Visit that will take place in two years—Year 6 of the accreditation cycle.

Description of Program Assessment Documents: A program assessment document is electronically submitted by each approved preparation program offered by the program sponsor. There are three parts to the program assessment documents:

Part I is the response to the current [Program Standards](). The narrative should describe *how* the program is meeting each component of the adopted program standards, including *where* and *when* these activities occur. (This can be demonstrated by hyperlinking within the narrative to the specific example within the documentation provided in Part II.) The response may include charts or diagrams to help the readers understand the program. In Part I it is important to make sure that the response is precise and clear enough that a reader who has no knowledge of your institution or the program can understand how your program aligns with each part of each program standard. In addition, you will want to ensure that each response meets the level indicated in the standard. For example, if the standards call for "multiple, systematic opportunities to…" the narrative must specify how candidates are provided more than one opportunity. If the standard indicates that "candidates are required to demonstrate," then the response will need to explain how that demonstration occurs, including a link to the appropriate document in Part II.

Part II includes current course syllabi, including course assignments and clinical practice opportunities for the most recent year. The course syllabi provide the documentation to support Part I. For example, if a program indicates that the standard is covered by a lecture or reading in a certain course, the readers will turn to (or click on a hyperlink to) the location in the syllabus that references the relevant lecture or reading. If there is no reference in that syllabus, or the readers are unable to find the syllabus due to a lack of clear linkages, readers will indicate that *More Information is Needed*. To ensure each component of the standard is discernible (or evident), link each component to the specific parts of the syllabi that demonstrate how that component is addressed. Otherwise, readers will indicate that *More Information is Needed*.

Part III is the documentation that supports the program's Biennial Reports. Part III discusses assessments that are used to determine candidate competence, including rubrics, training information and calibration activities that ensure the assessments are being administered and scored in a uniform and objective way. Do not include additional assessments in this section; only the 4-6 assessments reported in the Biennial Report should be discussed.

TPA Users: *There is no need to give the background on the development of any form of the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). However, it will be important to note how assessors are trained in the particular area, how often the scoring is calibrated and the information particular to the program for how the assessment is administered.*

FACT or FAS Users: *There is no need to provide* ***general*** *information on your formative assessment system if your program uses FACT or FAS. However, it will be important to note how the formative assessment system is implemented in your program.*

For other programs, it will be necessary to provide more comprehensive information about the assessments used. Include blank copies of the assessment instruments and the scoring rubric/procedures used to evaluate the information. Reviewers will be reading to answer these kinds of questions: If observation forms are used to measure candidate competence, upon what standards or rationale are these based? How does the program ensure that all assessors are using them in the same way? What types of training and practice are provided to ensure a common scoring technique?

Program Summary: The Program Summary serves as an "executive" summary of the full program narrative which provides readers with an overview of the program prior to reading the document. The Site Visit team will also use the Program Summary as they draft the report for the COA. **Each** program, even if it is not completing the Program Assessment process (i.e., inactive programs, recently approved programs), must develop a Program Summary, no longer than four pages in length. The Program Summary should provide a brief overview of the structure, courses, and sequence of the credential program. The Program Summary must be submitted as a separate Word document at the time the program assessment documents are submitted.

Please do not submit Common Standards or Preconditions during Program Assessment. Both will be reviewed closer to the site visit.

Schedules for Submission of Program Assessment Documents and Preliminary Report of Findings

Schedule for Submission of Documents

Program documents are due on the 15th of the month in October, November, or December 2012. The decision as to when to submit will be made by each program. There is an advantage to early submission. Should there be questions or additional information needed, there is more time for resolution between the October submission date and the deadline of finalizing all program assessment documents and planning for the Site Visits.

It is important to keep in mind that documents are read in the order they are received pending reader availability. It can take several months for your document to rise to the top of the queue and the resubmission and additional feedback sessions can take additional time beyond the initial read. The process can be lengthy from initial submission to having all standards preliminarily aligned and it is beneficial to have as much time as possible to complete the process prior to the site visit.

Extension Requests

Extensions may be requested and will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Extensions must be requested via email (programassessment@ctc.ca.gov) and must include the institution name, specific program requesting an extension (multiple subject, administrative credential, etc.), reason for extension, and proposed date of submission. Emails should come from the program coordinator and include a cc: to the dean, director of teacher education, or superintendent at the institution. *(Please do not cc: additional CTC staff/administrators.)*

Delinquent Submissions

The COA will be provided a list of delinquent documents and forms. Any required document or form that has not been received on time **and** has not had an extension request will be considered delinquent.

How and When to Submit Documents for Recently Approved, Transitioning, and Inactive Programs

Recently Approved: Programs at institutions in the Blue cohort that have been through Initial Program Review between October 2011 and October 2012 do not need to participate fully in Program Assessment. However, a program summary must be submitted to programassessment@ctc.ca.gov six months prior to the site visit. Additionally, these recently approved documents must have an updated narrative (using the guidelines set forth in PSA 10-12) and all current course syllabi and assessments, three months prior to the site visit date for team members to review.

Transitioning: A number of credential program standards have recently been revised and programs are currently transitioning or preparing to transition to newly adopted standards. Please note that the date that your programs have chosen to transition to the standards will be taken into account when determining what needs to be submitted to the Commission for both Program Assessment and Site Visits. It is advised that you contact the appropriate consultant in the credential area for guidance on when to submit a program assessment document for a recently transitioned program. A list of recently transitioned standards with the corresponding consultant contact information can be found here: http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-files/2012_Standards_in_Transition.pdf.

All transitioning programs must submit a Program Summary even though the program may not be participating in the full Program Assessment process.

Inactive: Programs that are currently inactive do not need to fully participate in Program Assessment. However, a program summary must be submitted to ProgramAssessment@ctc.ca.gov prior to the site visit.

Programs that have not participated in the Program Assessment process due to inactive status may be required to through a full Program Assessment review prior to reactivating the program. This process can take up to one year.

Review and Resubmission Timelines
Documents are reviewed on a first-submitted first-read basis pending availability of readers at Program Assessment reading sessions. The Preliminary Report of Findings is sent out after reading sessions. Initial reader feedback and status of the standard is shown in blue on the form. If a resubmission, is required, it must be sent in within one month of receipt of the readers' feedback. (*Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis. Follow the same extension request instructions as provided above.*) Resubmission feedback, if necessary, is indicated in a different color. Timely resubmission is important for keeping information fresh in the readers' minds. Once your program has been determined to be preliminarily aligned a finalized version of your document must be submitted without additional font colors or highlights. The site visit team will refer to this finalized copy if necessary.

Technical Assistance and Document Reading

Technical Assistance Webcast: As you prepare your document, please know that CTC staff is available to answer questions. A technical assistance webcast was recorded on March 2, 2012. The webcast and all supporting materials can be found on the Program Assessment Webpage.

Approved Programs Webcast: An additional webcast, recorded March 7, 2012, on how to read the Credential Information Guide (CIG) Approved Programs webpage can be viewed from the Webcast Page.

Participating in Document Reading Sessions: Program directors responsible for developing Program Assessment documents have found it highly beneficial to attend a program assessment reading session prior to submitting their own documents. Participating in a reading session provides the opportunity to receive calibration training to review another document and provide feedback, as well as to gain a better understanding of what a program assessment document should contain and how it can be formatted for ease of reading and understanding.

Reading sessions are open to members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR). Additionally, we are offering the opportunity to Deans and Directors of Educator Preparation Programs. If you are interested in participating in a Program Assessment reading session or you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to email staff at ProgramAssessment@ctc.ca.gov. For additional information on attending a Program Assessment reading session please read the Professional Development Opportunities page. Reading dates are listed at the bottom of the page. Be sure to sign up for Program Assessment and not Initial Program Review (IPR).

Please keep in mind when reviewing the CTC website that the Accreditation Handbook is only revised on a yearly basis and the Program Assessment Webpage is the best and most current source of information for technical assistance.

Document Formatting and Transmission

Program Assessment is a 100% electronic submission. Submit all documents in PDF format (with the exception of program summaries) with a hyperlinked table of contents as well as hyperlinks to supporting documentation. Read the Document Formatting and Transmission Requirements for detailed support regarding formatting and submission. *Documents with inadequate electronic organization will be returned to the program for further editing and resubmission.*

An excellent example of a well prepared electronic submission can be found on the program assessment webpage under the Templates, Samples and Forms section.

Narrative templates are available on the standards webpage for Career/Technical Education, Administrative Services, Reading and Literacy, and Multiple/Single subject program standards. (Additional templates will be posted as they are developed.) Programs are encouraged to review these templates and use them to organize the program narrative and supporting documentation.

Additionally, resubmissions must follow the guidelines set out in PSA 10-12. For resubmissions, additional information must be embedded within the program narrative and indicated with a new color font or a highlight to indicate what information has been added. *Resubmissions that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to the program for further editing and resubmission.*

Procedures for Reviewing and Providing Feedback of Program Assessment Documents

The program assessment document will be reviewed by trained members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR), or Deans, Associate, Deans or Program Directors who have expertise in the program area. The reviewers will also have access to the Biennial Reports that have been submitted as well as CTC feedback on those reports. Reviewers will be looking for the following:

- Does the document clearly and comprehensively describe how the program is aligned with each program standard?
- Does the response align with the standard? For example, if the standard states that candidates will have multiple, ongoing opportunities to demonstrate skills in a particular area, does the response describe multiple, ongoing opportunities or just one?
- Does the documentation provided in the syllabi and the assessment information provide support for the document? For example, if the program states that a standard is met by having candidates complete an assignment in a particular course, is that assignment noted in the course syllabus?

At the end of the first reading of the document, readers will determine one of two things. Either the standard is determined to be preliminarily aligned, or more information is needed. If more information is needed, readers will provide detailed information that describes what is needed to bring the standard to preliminary alignment. Once the readers are finished, Commission Program Assessment staff will send a copy of the feedback form to the institution/program sponsor for its response. A professional dialogue will then take place between program sponsors and reviewers (facilitated through the Commission staff) in order to get the most complete sense of whether the program is aligned to standards. This dialogue will help provide clarity and assist the reviewers in coming to preliminary findings. The dialogue does not go on without end. There will be a deadline at which time the Preliminary Report of Findings will be finalized. The format of the feedback will provide information regarding each program standard, using this form.

The finalized Preliminary Report of Findings impacts the implementation and structure of the Site Visit. For example, it will help in answering these kinds of questions: Does this program require an additional reviewer as part of the Site Visit team? What kinds of documentation will support or disprove claims made in the program assessment narrative? How might the Site Visit team gather that documentation to use as evidence?

Biennial Reports

Please be aware that the Year 3 biennial report is due near the time that 4th Year program assessment documents are due. This happens only one time in the 7-year cycle and it is important that you know this in advance so that you can prepare and plan accordingly. Please consult the Blue cohort map for additional information.

Submission Information Required by April 20, 2012

In order to help in the planning for timely readings of the program assessment documents, please complete the Proposed Submission Dates for All Programs form indicating which submission date you believe will best meet your needs for **each of your approved** educator preparation programs and submit by **April 20, 2012**. (Please note that when the actual documents are submitted they must include a Program Assessment Checklist with each individual program submission.)

Finally, please review the Credential Information Guide's (CIG) list of Approved Programs for your institution. Please contact us if you need any assistance in determining the currently approved programs at your institution.

If any of those programs are no longer offered by your institution, please contact Commission staff immediately. Otherwise, please have each program determine its preferred submission date, complete the contact information and return the page to us by **April 20, 2012**. For information on withdrawing a program or applying for inactive program status, email Program Assessment staff (programassessment@ctc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Hickey

Cheryl Hickey
Administrator of Accreditation